

FACT SHEET**Human Trafficking****Background**

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. It is a crime that involves using force, fraud or coercion to recruit, harbor, transport, provide or obtain a person for the purposes of sexual or labor exploitation. It frequently involves the transportation of victims across international borders; however, persons can be trafficked within their own countries and even within their own communities. According to the United Nations, trafficking of humans is one of the largest and fastest growing international criminal activities. The United States (U.S.) Department of State estimates between 17,500 and 18,500 victims are trafficked into the U.S. annually. Women and children comprise the largest group of victims but men are also subjected to trafficking. Many victims are forced to work in prostitution or in the sex entertainment industry; others are forced into indentured servitude in domestic, restaurant, janitorial, factory and migrant agricultural work. Traffickers employ various methods to instill fear in victims, to compel them to engage in activities against their will, and to keep them enslaved. These methods include debt bondage and threats and physical violence against victims and/or their families.

Federal and State Legislation

In October 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), Public Law No. 106-386, made human trafficking a federal crime and made victims of a severe form of human trafficking eligible for federally-funded or administered benefits and services to the same extent as refugees. The TVPA was reauthorized and amended by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (TVPRA), Public Law No. 108-193. Effective December 2003, the TVPRA extended the

eligibility for federally-funded or administered benefits and services to certain family members of victims.

In September 2005, the California Legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 180 and Assembly Bill 22 (Chapters 239 and 240, Statutes of 2005). These bills, which became law on January 1, 2006, made human trafficking a crime in California. This legislation also established a task force to develop protocols for handling human trafficking cases.

Benefits and Services Available to Victims

To be eligible for benefits and services, an individual must be certified as a victim of a severe form of human trafficking. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (ACF), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is the federal agency responsible for certifying trafficking victims.

In order to receive certification, victims of trafficking must be willing to assist with the investigation and prosecution of traffickers. In addition, they must have completed a bona fide application for a T-Visa or they must have been granted continued presence status by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for the purpose of contributing to the prosecution of the traffickers. Children under 18 years of age who have been subjected to a severe form of trafficking do not need to be certified in order to receive benefits; however, ORR will issue them a letter declaring them victims of a severe form of trafficking. The ORR provides information to state and local governments and service providers on the requirements for certification, the documents that victims of severe forms of

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trafficking are issued, and the procedures agencies should follow in confirming eligibility for benefits.

In California, persons certified by ORR as trafficking victims are eligible to receive federally-funded benefits and services including: Refugee Cash Assistance, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Refugee Medical Assistance, Medi-Cal, Refugee Employment Social Services, Food Stamps, and other services to assist victims with adjustment and facilitate self-sufficiency. Certified trafficking victims are required to meet each program's income, resource and other eligibility requirements.

In April 2006, ORR contracted with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to provide services to victims of human trafficking. Under this contract, USCCB collaborates with subcontracted local agencies that have a demonstrated track record in providing services to trafficking victims. The USCCB reimburses the local agencies for services to both pre-certified and certified trafficking victims on a case-by-case basis. Before providing services, the local agencies must first request an authorization from ORR for each client. Funding is available for direct client services and administration costs. Funds for client services may be used to provide items or services to meet a victim's basic needs, such as shelter, food, clothing, and health and mental health care. Client services funds may also be used for items or services needed to move a victim toward self sufficiency, such as payment of legal fees, child care, English language training and job skills training.

For more information on benefits and services available to human trafficking victims, visit the Find Services page on the California Department of Social Services' Web site at:

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/FindServic_2312.htm

To apply for benefits or services, contact the County Welfare Department (CWD) in the county where you live. For a complete listing of CWDs, visit the following web site:

http://www.cwda.org/aboutCWDA_members.cfm

To report suspected human trafficking, call the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. This hotline can help you identify social service organizations and other resources available in your community to help protect and serve victims.

To find out more about Human Trafficking, visit the ACF's Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Web site at:

www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/